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Sectoral policy questions

Environment and sustainable development

International migration and development, including the question of the convening of a United Nations conference on international migration and development to address migration issues

Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Letter dated 7 September 2001 from the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Tehran Consensus, adopted on 22 August 2001, on the occasion of the Tenth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries of the Group of 77, held in Tehran from 18 to 22 August 2001.

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly under items 108, 110, 112 and 118 of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Bagher **Asadi**
Ambassador
Islamic Republic of Iran
Chairman of the Group of 77

* A/56/150.

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Annex to the letter dated 7 September 2001 from the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Tehran Consensus

South-South Cooperation: a common imperative

(22 August 2001, Tehran)

We, the participants in the Tenth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries, held in Tehran from 18 to 22 August 2001, which marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Caracas Programme of Action, in reaffirming the relevance and the validity of the various declarations and programmes of action subsequently adopted by the Group of 77, and in reiterating our firm commitment to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Havana Declaration and Programme of Action, have resolved to move forcefully and urgently forward on the following five objectives of common concern to the developing world in the context of South-South cooperation, and to that effect call upon all partners in the international development effort to extend genuine support to achieving those objectives.

1. Consolidating South-South platform

While we note the increasing need and potential for South-South cooperation and significant progress in a number of areas, we are fully cognizant of problems, gaps and challenges that exist. We also recognize the enormous potentialities, both unrealized and untapped, in many domains that need to be harnessed. The gap between the set objectives and agreed actions and the actual implementation should be effectively bridged.

The situation has evolved over the last two decades, and new challenges, issues and conditions have emerged. A realistic, objective assessment of the Group's plans and programmes of action, and the status of their implementation, should be undertaken with a view to consolidating them into an updated platform to be submitted for consideration and action by the High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation, to be held in 2003 in accordance with the Havana Summit decision. To this end, all necessary measures should be taken to provide the member States of the Group of 77 with a strategic overview of the new global environment and its interlinkages as well as of changes in developing countries that are of relevance to South-South cooperation today, including the new areas where such cooperation can be fruitfully undertaken.

2. Building stronger South institutions at the global level

The coordination of policy and joint negotiating positions on major issues on the international agenda are essential, and require adequate intellectual and technical support, internal coordination and a commensurate preparatory process. The Group of 77, drawing on its recent successes in major international processes, should undertake to pursue the legitimate concerns and demands of the South equally vigorously at the Doha (Qatar), Monterrey (Mexico) and Johannesburg (South

Africa) Conferences, all of which will address vital issues for all countries and peoples of the South. The Group should continue to consolidate its new sense of assertiveness as a major credible and potent negotiating force.

South-South cooperation at the global level requires adequate and structured institutional support. Immediate steps should be taken to expand and strengthen the secretariat of the Group of 77 in New York in order to provide greater support to the activities of the Group. The process of institution-building should be pursued in earnest as one of the principal building blocs of more effective South-South cooperation in the global arena. First and foremost, this requires the South to mobilize adequate financial and skilled human resources to support its own institutions.

3. Bridging the knowledge and information gap

Easily accessible empirical data and a global overview of South-South cooperation are lacking. This information and knowledge gap needs to be closed urgently, which calls, as a matter of priority, for the creation of a collective capacity, inter alia, through the launching of a "South Report" on the state of South-South cooperation as the basic reference and major policy and analytical tool for South-South cooperation.

4. Building broad-based partnerships

South-South cooperation is a common endeavour of peoples and countries of the South, based on their common objectives and solidarity. It should be broadly based, involving not only Governments but also the private sector, academic institutions, civil society organizations, various innovative arrangements, including those in the domain of arts and culture, indeed the common citizens and the people at large, as well as South institutions, groupings and other organizations that work within and between developing countries. New forms and partnerships for assuring such mobilization and broad participation should be encouraged and practised, drawing as much as possible on new information and communication technologies.

5. Mobilizing global support for South-South cooperation

South-South cooperation has suffered from benign neglect by the international community. The overall policy has been fragmented, with limited financial resources allocated in support of such cooperation. For effective, meaningful support, the international community, including the United Nations system and other major international institutions, as well as the donor community, are urged to re-examine their approach and policy and to provide vigorous catalytic support, including the requisite financial resources to all forms of South-South cooperation. In this context, the role of the United Nations Development Programme in supporting South-South cooperation and in advocating a more inclusive globalization should be reaffirmed. Active support for various institutions of the South, including research institutions, is equally important towards expanding the Group's institutional and negotiating capacity.

Public opinion needs to be more aware of the purposes and value of South-South cooperation. It is proposed that an International Decade on South-South Cooperation and a United Nations day for South-South Cooperation be launched in order to contribute to increased awareness and to generate political dynamism and visibility that accompany other decades in the international arena.

Message of appreciation to the host country

This meeting, taking place in this very auspicious Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, initiated by the Islamic Republic of Iran, has reflected both the letter and spirit for mutually reinforcing South-South cooperation and relations with our developed partners.